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1970/05/03



Department of State

Mc MANUS

TELEGRAM

TOP SECRET

Z 030945Z MAY 70
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 654
RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON 340
BT
T O P S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 717

4 5 6 Q

1970 MAY 3 AM 9 57

NODIS/KHMER

CORRECTED COPY

1. DATT AND AIRA CALLED TO FANK HQS 1030G MORNING 3 MAY 70 TO ATTEND CONFERENCE WITH GEN SAK SUTSAKHAN, ASST CHIEF OF STAFF, GEN U SAY, ASST CHIEF OF LOGISTICS, AND GEN POK SAM AN, TACTICAL ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER. MEETING LASTED MORE THAN ONE AND ONE HALF HOURS WHILE GENERALS DESCRIBED DETERIORATED SITUATION IN PREY VENG, KANDAL AND TAKEO PROVINCES.
2. SINCE NOON 2 MAY CAMBODIAN MILITARY POSITIONS ALONG ROUTE 1 AT NEAK LOUONG (WT 3442) AND KOMPONG TRABEK (WT 5431) AND TOWN OF BANAM (WT 8825). GENERALS URGED THAT AS FIRST PRIORITY, III CORPS CONTINUE MOVE UP ROUTE ONE TO MEKONG RIVER AND THAT SUPPORTING ATTACKS BE MADE BY IV CORPS ACROSS BORDER INTO SOUTHERN PREY VENG AND SVAY RIENG PROVINCES.
3. IN TAKEO PROVINCE, THE TOWN OF TAKEO HAS BEEN ENCIRCLED AND CUT OFF FROM ANG TASSOM. TWO BATTALIONS HAVE BEEN HOLDING OUT FOR THREE NIGHTS OF CONTINUED ATTACK AND SUFFERING FROM HEAVY LOSSES. TWO PARA BATTALIONS IN ANG TASSOM UNABLE TO BREAK THROUGH ENEMY DEFENSIVE LINE VICINITY VT 659167 AND ATTEMPTING DEVIATE TO NORTH OF ROUTE 25 TO MOVE EAST AND RELIEVE TROOPS IN TAKEO TOWN. ENEMY ATTACKING TAKEO TOWN FROM SOUTH, SOUTHWEST AND WEST SUPPORTED BY MORTARS AND ROCKETS FROM FIRE BASES. MAIN THRUSTS ARE FROM SOUTH ALONG ROUTES 2 AND 81 AND WEST ALONG ROUTE 25. ENEMY FIRE BASES LOCATED VICINITY, VT 7311, VT 745101, VT 803111, VT 787127, VT 784133, VT 740159 AND VT 662137. ACCURATE ASSESMENT OF ENEMY STRENGTH NOT DETERMINED. A BRIGADE WITH THREE BATALIONS IS ENROUTE FROM PHNOM PENH VIA ROUTE L TO ANG TASSOM TO OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO TWO PARA BATTALIONS ATTEMPTING MOVE EAST. SEVERAL BLOWN BRIDGES ON ROUTE 2 NORTH OF ANG TASSOM ARE RETARDING LINK UP WITH PARA BATTALIONS. GENERALS REQUEST US/ARVN AIR STRIKES ON ENEMY POSITIONS AROUND TAKEO TOWN AND ON ROUTE 25 EAST OF ANG TASSOM. ALSO REQUEST HELICOPTER-LIFT OF 2 KHMER KROM SPECIAL FORCES BATTALIONS SCHEDULED FOR DELIVERY PHNOM PENH NIGHTS 3 AND 4 MAY TO MAKE RENDEVOUS WITH TWO PARA BATTALIONS ATTEMPTING TO MOVE FROM ANG TASSOM. THIS MOVEMENT REQUESTED ASAP.

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PHNOM PENH 717, 030945Z MAY, (NODLS/KHMER)

4. IN CONJUNCTION WITH PARA 3 ABOVE AND AS THRID PRIORITY A FORCE PENETRATION INTO CAMBODIAN TERRITORY ALONG ROUTE 2 FROM AREA TINH BIEN IS REQUESTED. THIS ATTACK INTO ENEMY REAR AREA EXPECTED TO BLUNT THRUST IN TAKEO - ANG TASSOM REGION.

5. GENERALS URGED ATTACHES FORWARD REQUEST EARLIEST TO LEVEL US AUTHORITY NECESSARY FOR DECISION AND/OR ACTION. THEY INSISTED THAT RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE AND CONCURRENCE OF PRIME MINISTER.

6. AFTER EXPLANATION OF POLICY US GOVT AND FACT THAT REQUEST IN NO WAY ASSURED ACTION, THE DATT AGREED TO FORWARD THE INFORMATION.

Cont
COMMENT: WHILE FULLY SYMPATHETIC SERIOUS POSITION IN WHICH CAMBODIANS FIND THEMSELVES, I RECOMMEND AGAINST RESPONSE ANY OF THEIR REQUESTS EXCEPT PERHAPS THAT OF AIR ATTACKS AGAINST VC/NVA FIRE BASES AROUND TAKEO. REASONS MY RECOMMENDATION ARE MORE POLITICAL THAN MILITARY. IF CREDENCE IS TO BE GIVEN PRESIDENT'S RECENT SPEECH, AS WELL AS TO HIS OVERALL POLICY, WE MUST DRAW A LINE SOMEWHERE. MOVEMENT OF TROOPS BEYOND SVAY RIENG, HELICOPTER-LIFT OF TROOPS TO TAKEO AREA AND ATTACK IN SUPPORT LATTER'S DEFENDERS WOULD ONLY APPEAR ACCOMPLISH EXACTLY WHAT USG'S CRITICS FEAR, I.E. GET USG FURTHER INVOLVED INTO HOPELESS MORASS. THERE IS NO RPT NO GUARANTEE THAT ANY OF REQUESTED MOVES WILL DO OTHER THAN PUSH ENEMY TOWARD PHNOM PENH OR ELSEWHERE INTO CAMBODIA WITHOUT REALLY RESOLVING ISSUE OR STOPPING VC/NVA. WE ARE ALREADY REPLYING TO GOC REQUESTS IN WHAT I CONSIDER MORE THAN ACCEPTABLE MANNER AND WE SHOULD DRAW THE LINE NOW. THIS IS NOT RPT NOT GOING TO INCREASE OUR POPULARITY LOCALLY BUT I SUGGEST THAT EITHER DATT SIMPLY INFORM CAMBODIAN MILITARY OF TURN DOWN THEIR REQUEST DUE US/ARVN COMMITMENTS ELSEWHERE OR THAT I BE INSTRUCGED INFORM LON NOL EXACTLY HOW MUCH HE CAN EXPECT FROM USG. GOC SEEMS TO BE BECOMING TRULY CONSCIOUS ITS WEAKNESS AND DESIROUS FALL INTO OUR ARMS BUT I AM CONVINCED WE MUST STOP SOMEWHERE, EVEN IF LON NOL GOVT THREATENED.

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